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AUTHOR	Clark, Craig B.
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ABSTRACT

For several years, Weaver High School (Hartford, Connecticut) has used a grant to fund the services of a consultant to provide information and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Weaver has a program that allows students with multiple disabilities to be part of the school program and all activities. Activities have provided learning experiences that have made students more aware of ADA and how it applies to them all. One activity that has worked well with technology education students is conducting accessibility surveys around the school facility. One example of a problem with simple and inexpensive solutions is a wall phone hung too high that could be lowered or replaced by a desk phone. Teachers stress to students the proper terms and language etiquette to use when talking to or about persons with disabilities. The interdisciplinary connections with activities involving ADA are many. The technology teacher has been actively involved with the social studies and current issues classes, where projects are related to civil rights. The mathematics connection is made in surveys and architectural design work. The technology teacher's work with health and physical education teachers has helped his students be more aware of various physical disabilities. Other success with inclusion has occurred in the art department, health education classes, and physical education. (YLB)

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C B Clark

Inclusion in the Technology Education Classroom

Craig B. Clark, DTE

For several years now I have been involved in a program at Weaver High School that has been changing, improving and offering the students opportunities and knowledge that is very meaningful. The school has had through a grant had the services of a consultant who has helped to provide information and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This 1990 civil rights law, which covers schools as well as many other buildings and facilities, has been a very meaningful topic for staff as well as students.

Weaver High School in Hartford, Connecticut has a program which allows students with multiple disabilities to be part of the school program and all activities.

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Much has happened since the students became part of Weaver nine years ago. Some of the activities that I will be talking about has allowed for connections with other departments within the school. The students in the CAD classes have been able to do work that is real and not just an activity from a book. Students have also been exposed to other students who they may not have otherwise met or worked with. I have also been able to work with some of the students from the program and included them in my classroom activities as members of the class. We have included several of the students with disabilities into the technology education program as well as other programs within the school.

Let me start with a activity that will give some thought on inclusion. Not long ago I saw a Sandra Bullock film entitled "Who Shot Pat" this movie is not a Hollywood great but it had a few scenes that I related to when I attended high school and maybe a few of you have had similar experiences. The film takes place in a high school in Brooklyn, New York. In one of the scenes one of the high school students is informed that because he is not wearing a white shirt that day, he will not be able to attend the assembly program. I know there were a few times I did not have my white shirt and therefore I was not permitted to attend the assembly program that day. Maybe you have had a similar experience where you were excluded or felt excluded. Think back to that, it does not have to have been a high school experience. Maybe a work experience or shopping but think of at least one time where you were *excluded* and list several words that would describe how you felt at that time.

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Responses to the Question, "How did it feel when you were..."

Excluded?	Included?
angry	proud
resentful	secure
hurt	special
frustrated	comfortable
lonely	recognized
different	confident
confused	happy
isolated	excited
inferior	trusted
worthless	cared about
invisible	liked
substandard	accepted
unwanted	appreciated
unaccented	reinforced
closed	loved
ashamed	grateful
	normal
	open
	positive
	nurtured
	important
	responsible
	grown up (Villa pg. 7)

Think of a time when you were *included* in something, maybe at school was there an event or program that was not open to everyone? Think of that event and how did you feel to be special and included in that activity or program.

How many of the above responses described how you felt when you were excluded or included? Not to many years ago students with disabilities were placed in other schools which excluded them from being with students in the public schools. ADA says that students must be allowed to attend the public schools that any other student

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attend. Inclusion has been debated to a great extent, there are pros and cons that can be brought up about inclusion. Today I plan to share some of the positive that has come from inclusion as well as activities that have provided learning experiences for the students of Weaver High School that have made them more aware of ADA and how it applies to all of them.

One activity that has worked out well with the students in the technology education department is conducting accessibility surveys around the school facility. Weaver High School was opened in 1974. There were two times that major repairs have been made to the building in 1988 when the building, which was built on a swamp, was showing structural damage. In 1990 because the school is a sealed building the ventilation system throughout the building had to be redone. The students receive a lesson about ADA, what it is about and standards in buildings that should be followed. We then go for a short tour of part of the building, at this time we find many violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Some violations are minor others are more serious. We use the Adaptive Environments checklist from the book they put out called "Action Guide". Look at the check list that I have passed out, this is the same check list that the students use when they go for their tour of the building. I have taken the liberty, prior to entering this room to conduct a survey of part of this facility. Here are a few of the problems that I found in this short time. Of course the classroom activity does not end there. The architectural students now have to find a solution to this problem which meets the ADA standards the solution also must comply with fire and building codes. Let me also add that the Americans with Disabilities Act is not just for the students in the school it is for all persons using the school. This includes of course the students along with staff

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members, parents and visitors. One example of a problem which has simple and inexpensive solution is the wall phone. The phone in my classroom is eight inches to high. This can be fixed several ways, lower it at leas eighth inches the distance to make it comply is simple. Another solution is to install a desk phone (don't forget to check the height of the desk). Just as I was able to find a number of areas to be addressed in this building and many at Weaver High School, many facilities do have problems which need to be addressed. The students will be able to develop their own awareness and understanding of ADA as well as building needs. One other way I have been able to get the idea across is to have a student with disabilities visits the class while we evaluate parts of the building. The fact that students see the problems encountered will help them to appreciate the needs of ADA. Also the most expensive solution doe not have to be the only answer. The main concern is, does it comply

I have used the term disability a number of times and should give you a definition of it:

The ADA utilizes a three-pronged definition of disability. For the purpose of coverage under the ADA, a person with a disability us defined as an individual who:

1) *has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or*
2) *has a record or history of such an impairment; or*
3) *is perceived or regarded as having such an impairment. (Adaptive Environments pg.6)*

The Americans with Disabilities Act covers a lot and what I get into is a small part of the law. I cover what is in schools and what may be experienced in the community. This past summer while I was on vacation in Newport, RI, I noticed a sign

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on the door of one of the antique shops. This sign read that persons with strollers and wheelchairs are responsible for anything they break or damage. This is a violation of the persons civil rights and singles them out from others, it discourages persons from going into the store. *Anyone* who breaks or damages items in a store should be held responsible. Remember ADA is a federal law, a state may make its own standards which create better opportunities for persons with disabilities if they choose.

One true story, in Hartford a number of years ago Edith Harris, an activist for persons with disabilities, herself a person who used a wheelchair. Ms. Harris was waiting for a bus in Hartford, when the bus arrived it could not accommodate her wheel chair, the driver informed her that the next bus would be able to accommodate her needs. She waited for the next bus but it to could not accommodate her and the wheel chair. She waited for the third bus but this one had a lift but it was broken. When the next bus could not accommodate her she blocked the bus to protest what was happening and that there was little concern for her, and others who are disabled. When the Hartford police arrived to arrest her they called a state agency and said that they could not arrest her because of her wheelchair. They were informed that they can and should arrest her because she broke the law and was doing this to make persons aware of the problem. The police still insisted that they could not arrest her, the reason for this was not that they felt bad for her but, because the paddy wagon could not accommodate her.

I also stress to students the proper terms to use when talking to, or about persons with disabilities. One thing that is obvious and that is not to refer to persons who do not have disabilities as "normal." The proper term is non-disabled. This chart shows a

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number of terms that should be used. I am sure that several years from now there will be changes to this chart.

"LANGUAGE"

General Guidelines

- Always put people, not the disability, first
- Avoid words that are patronizing or demeaning
- Use value-neural terms
- Avoid clichés and platitudes

Specific Guidelines

- Do not refer to people with disabilities as *"the* disabled", "*the* blind", "*the* deaf", "*the* retarded." Use instead, "person with a disability," "person with a visual impairment," "hearing impaired."
- Avoid the term *handicapped.*
- Never refer to people with disabilities as "crippled," "suffering," "unfortunate," or "invalids." These terms define people in terms of their condition and create demeaning images
- Do not use euphemisms such as "physically challenged," "handi-capable," or "differently-abed." They are usually coined by non-disabled individuals. People with disabilities are aware that they have a disability and would prefer not to be described in euphemistic terms.
- Avoid patronizing terms such as "brave," "courageous," "inspirational," "gutsy," and "special."

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- Do not use "confined to," "suffers from," "victim of," or other similar language that evokes emotions. Use "person who uses a wheelchair," or "person who has cerebral palsy."
- Avoid referring to people who don't have disabilities as "normal," "healthy," or "able-bodied." The appropriate term is "non-disabled."
- Terms such as "crazy," "demented," "neurotic," and "abnormal" should be avoided.
- Do not use labels, such as "epileptic." Use person who has epilepsy."

ETIQUETTE TIPS

- Always speak directly to a person who has a disability. Do not assume that a companion will speak for him or her.
- It is okay to offer assistance, but wait for an affirmative reply before touching or pushing the person. If the person declines, do not insist on helping. If the person is rude, remember that having a disability does not necessarily mean you are a nice person.
- Treat adults as adults and use first names only if you are using first names for everyone in the group or audience.
- Don't ask personal questions that you would not ask someone who does not have a disability.
- Do not commend people with disabilities for accomplishing tasks that they perform daily out of necessity.
- Always look directly at a deaf person when you are speaking to him or her, even when an interpreter is present.

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- Never pretend to understand someone with a speech impediment if you don't. Repeat what you think the person has said so that he or she can confirm your understanding.
- Do not stare or avoid eye contact with someone who has a facial or other disfigurement. However, being initially surprised and looking is perfectly natural." (Progressive Attitudes)

Some of the above may seem petty but the way you talk or act can make a difference to the person you are referring to. I am sure that the contents of this list will change in the years to come and better terminology will be used. On a recent radio talk show in Hartford, Connecticut the host was referring to a toy as the "handicapped Barbie" one of the callers said it helped to make people feel sorry for these people which he thought was good. I called in to express my opinion, I tried to correct the host and say that the doll is "Becky" and the term she was using was making it sound like handicap was something to play with. Before I was able to discuss the "feeling sorry" the host thanked me and cut me off. The real purpose of the doll is to have her as a friend of Barbie and treated just like that, as a friend. I have two of these dolls and I find them to be an excellent teaching aid when I discus accessibility. They are hard to come by and might be a collectors item in the future. Shortly after Mattel released the doll they found that there was a problem. Becky and her wheel chair could not get into the Barbie dream house. A case of toys imitating life?

Last spring I was asked about having one of the students with special needs in my class. I decided to have "Patrick" in my fourth period architectural class. Patrick uses a wheel chair and communicates with facial expressions. When Patrick would come to the class he was brought in by one of the special education teachers. At times he was

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accompanied by the above teacher or a par-professional, a physical therapist or even a consultant. There were times he was there by himself as a member of the class. I helped Patrick design, using CADKEY7 his dream house. Prior to him coming to class I would have furniture already on file as patterns. I would draw a room and ask Patrick if it looked good, through his facial expression of approval I would either continue or change what was on the screen. The biggest reward came on the last day of classes before exam week. We plotted out Patrick's dream house. The smile on his face was the biggest indication of his approval of how his drawing came out.

This year I have already started setting up to have several students come join my classes at different times of the day. I also will have greater interaction of all the students during this time.

One of the high schools in Hartford, Hartford Public High School, almost lost their accreditation and is on probation at this time. Weaver High School is coming up for their accreditation in four years. One important item that hurt Hartford Public and that could have a negative impact on Weaver is accessibility. This is of course not the only area that hurt HPHS but it is one. I plan to have in place an action plan for improvements at Weaver which hopefully will help us through the process. In addition the fact that students will be working on the activity is positive for the ten year review of the school.

The interdisciplinary connection with activities involving ADA are many. I have been activity involved with the social studies classes and the current issues class. We are able to relate the projects with civil rights. The mathematics connection is there with the surveys and the architectural design work. I have worked with the health and physical education teachers to help my students be more aware of various physical disabilities.

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Each year I have been able to involve more staff members and students. One buildings and grounds project is being built now, the press box which will have an elevator for accessibility but there will be a ramp and path to get to the stands and press box. I will be pleased to see at least one student design get selected each year for improvements to the Weaver High School site. In addition the students can gain so much through the learning experience through sharing with class mates as well as students in other programs.

I am not the only teacher who has been involved in this type of activity. The social issues class has been very active and learning about the law and its applications within a public school as well as other environments. The art department has also included students and these students have gotten involved with the projects in the classroom. The health education classes have become aware of the importance of Americans with Disabilities Act and what the disabilities mean within our society and what a person may be limited by. Even physical education has been open to the special needs students, these students have also become popular in the classes. Here are a few words from students "Ro should be in class with all of us. How else is she going to learn the really important stuff? Besides we learn a lot from her." (Villa page 48) This is one quote about a student in a public school and her class mates feelings about her being in the same fourth grade class.

The efforts at inclusion that I have used are ones that I have set up myself, or with several other colleagues. The school you are in, the needs of the student, your teaching style will help to determine what should be done to offer inclusion within a school. "Several researchers have observed that classroom teachers learned to adopt curriculum for an included student incidentally, by observing special education teachers and staff as

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they worked with the student." (Janney, pg. 159) As professionals we should not "wing it", work with many persons there are many special education staff, different therapists, consultants, I have had many persons with disabilities visit the class and many are excited to see what is being done. As in the case of "Patrick", I was excited on how this effort went. The reward was seeing the smile on his face.

ADA and inclusion open more doors for more students. Let the opening of these doors be a learning experience for all, and the opportunity to bring more students into the technology education program along with the positive exposure.

Craig B. Clark, DTE has taught at Weaver High School in Hartford, Connecticut for twenty-two years. He is the current president of the Connecticut Technology Education Association and has been involved with many professional activities. This past fall he received an award for his work in the classroom from the Americans with Disabilities Act Coalition of Connecticut.

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